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Big relief for PTI

Imran, Qureshi acquitted in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has acquitted PTI founder Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in cipher case. Rigorous imprisonment of 10 years each was awarded to Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi on January 30 this year. Appeal was filed against this conviction in IHC.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Amir Farooq announced short order.

Barrister Suleman Safdar counsel for PTI founder said Azam Khan gave cipher to PTI founder. There are no documents in this regard. This is responsibility of prosecution to prove. Law is very clear. Decisions of Supreme Court are there. Prosecution has to discharge this obligation.

The CJ IHC Amir Farooq inquired has prosecution nothing more than the statement of Azam Khan. Prosecution case had

been easy when they would have presented copy of cipher in the court. Justice Mian Gulhasan Aurangzeb remarked why one man is imprisoned in jail on the misplacement of a paper.

It is pertinent to note that two cases were registered against Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood and other leaders in Golra police station in 2022. Earlier, former PM Imran Khan was acquitted in two May 9 cases.

Violent clashes were broken out across Pakistan after former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested on May 9, 2023. The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers were agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order. Army installations, including Corps Commander's house in Lahore, had come under attack during the protests by

PTI workers. It is pertinent to mention that the PTI founder is named as main accused in all the May 9 riots cases.

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub hailed the verdict and called for their immediate release.

"A big day for the leader and the party. A fake, frivolous and fraudulent case is sent packing by IHC. Other cases will also meet their Waterloo soon. Khan will step out of Adiala as the undisputed leader of a resurgent nation. Congratulations everyone," said PTI spokesperson Raouf Hasan. Talking to the media, PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said: "The nation saw today that the just verdict came and the banner of justice was held high and that baseless case was eliminated in which Imran Khan spent around 10 months in jail and for which he was kept in jail all the time.

Barrister Aqeel Malik says Cipher case a reality which cannot be denied

Spokesperson says prosecution to decide on challenging verdict. Govt, army to never compromise on national security

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): After the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi got relief from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in cipher case, a federal government's spokesperson on legal affairs said on Monday that the courts should be "mindful" of national security while deciding on the sensitive matters.

Barrister Aqeel Malik, the federal government's spokesperson for legal affairs, stated this while addressing a press conference in Islamabad shortly after the IHC acquitted the top PTI leaders in the cipher case. In a major relief to the embattled former ruling party, the IHC annulled Imran and Qureshi's conviction in the infamous cipher case containing charges of misusing and misplacing the classified diplomatic document. "Detailed verdict of the case is due to arrive," Barrister Malik said, insisting that the cipher case was a "reality" which cannot be denied. He said that the former prime minister waved a classified document at a public gathering, whereas, then-principal secretary Azam Khan also confessed about a "missing copy of the cipher".



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb called on by Jason Lamb, Deputy Director, Focus Country Implementation of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Highlighting historic decrease in inflation, Tarar reaffirms govt's commitment to revive economy

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday termed a historic and record decrease in inflation a positive indicator for the country and reaffirmed the government's commitment to work hard till the complete revival of the economy.

Addressing a press conference here at the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Secretariat at Model Town, the federal minister said, "The inflation rate has dropped to 11 percent during this month beyond expectations, as reported by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics while Bloomberg, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, World Bank and other international departments are also acknowledging progress of Pakistan's economy and also see it on right direction".

Attaullah Tarar highlighted the government's tireless efforts from day one, focusing on the economy, leading to several positive outcomes. "These include a significant drop in inflation, lower fuel prices, unprecedented growth in the



pace of work on CPEC projects during Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's tenure, highlighting the commendable role of Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, in ensuring their swift completion. He ensured these projects would be completed with more pace. However, he criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, attributing increased grievances from friendly countries and isolation of Pakistan to their actions, including halting work on CPEC projects.

Tarar expressed confidence in Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, noting that other friendly nations trust him, citing UAE's \$10 billion direct investment allocation and anticipating significant outcomes from Shehbaz Sharif's four-day visit to China. "There is a serious government in Pakistan now and due to its steps in favour of the country and its people, it saved the country from default, stabilised its currency, increased IT exports, which built the trust of the business community.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a group photo with the delegation of World Football and Pakistan Football League (UK) at Parliament House.

Gilani calls for use sports as a vehicle for positive change in society

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday called for making concerted efforts to use sports as a vehicle for positive change and transformation in society.

"Football is no ordinary sport, but a bridge that transcends boundaries, unites cultures, and ignites passion in the hearts of millions," he expressed these views while addressing an event arranged in honor of international football delegation at Parliament House, said a news release.

Highlighting the potential Pakistan has in the sport of football, he remarked that there is no dearth of talent and pas-

sion. "All we need is professional coaching and nurturing to produce world-class players and put Pakistan on the map of international football," he added.

Gilani expressed his excitement to see football gaining momentum in the country and anticipated a bright future for this wonderful sport in Pakistan.

The Chairman Senate acknowledged the pivotal role of the Pakistan Football League (PFL) UK in pioneering international football in Pakistan, their visionary initiatives, including the impactful "Football 4 Hope," exemplify their commitment to social development, educa-

tion, and inclusivity. "They are not only nurturing talent but also fostering unity and resilience," Gilani observed, adding that their commitment to implementing international standards and making football accessible to all, resonated deeply with his own vision. The international delegation of football community brings with them a wealth of experience, talent, and dedication, which could help Pakistan embark on a journey to elevate its position in the global football arena. Gilani assured his all-out support for the promotion of state-of-the-art football facilities and nurturing of local talent in Pakistan.

PM directs immediate abolishment of Pak PWD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for immediate dissolution of the Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak PWD) due to years' long poor performance and corruption. The prime minister issued the directive during a high level meeting held on reducing the government expenditures and the size of its infrastructure, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister observed that the Pak PWD as a department had failed to achieve its objectives and asked for an alternate mechanism for the development projects which were tasked to it.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahsan Khan Cheema, PM's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan and other relevant senior officials.

For reduction of government expenditures, the prime minister was apprised of a report compiled by a committee headed by Chairman Deputy Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan.

The committee had recommended for abolishment of certain government entities and merger of others. The prime minister directed the committee for finalization of further recommendations.

Coal mine company Manager, contractor among 11 persons suffocated to death in Sanjdi

Independent Report

QUETTA: At least 11 persons including a Manager of private coal mine company, contractor and nine mine workers died due to suffocation in a coal mine located in Sanjdi mine field near Quetta on Monday evening.

The Chief Mines Inspector Abdul Ghani confirmed the casualties occurred due to the suffocation after poisonous gas filled in the coal mine while they were busy in mining activity.

He said that the bodies of all dead persons have been retrieved from the affected coal mine. The coal mine has also been sealed, he added. The Chief Mines Inspector further informed that the bodies of the ill fated mine workers are being dispatched to their native areas.

He said that the deceased mine workers belonged to Sawat area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Meanwhile, the spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind said that the preliminary report of the Mines and Mineral Development regarding the coal mine mishap has been received.

According to the report, the poisonous gas was spread in the coal mine which caused suffocation and death of 12 persons including a contractor and Mines Manager.

Shahid Rind said that the incident was occurred in coal mine of a private mines company.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the special meeting to prevent power theft.

Increases monthly stipend of special persons to Rs 7,500 Maryam orders to accelerate crackdown on electricity theft

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a special meeting to review issues and actions taken to curb electricity theft in Punjab, directed to present a comprehensive report on electricity theft based on more authentic data.

The Chief Minister was briefed by Chief Secretary and IG Punjab about the ongoing crackdown against electricity thieves in the province. They

said, "660 police officers are assisting in the campaign against electricity thieves in each district." They also submitted a report on 05 electricity distribution companies including LESCO. Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Murray Aurangzeb, Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari and MPA Sania Ashiq attended the meeting. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar

Zaman, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Sajid Zafar Dal, Secretaries and other relevant officers were also present.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a special meeting to review Chief Minister Himmat Card project, has increased monthly stipend of special persons from Rs.6,000 to Rs.7,500.



LAHORE: Former President of Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Leader, Dr. Arif Alvi talking to media persons, at Punjab Assembly in Lahore.

Aurangzeb emphasizes significant potential of e-governance in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb has emphasized the significant potential of e-governance in Pakistan.

Talking to Deputy Director, Focus Country Implementation of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Jason Lamb in Islamabad, he said the digitization of the tax system is a pivotal step towards modernizing tax collection, which will enhance transparency and revenue growth.

Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb also mentioned the necessary improvements required in existing data sources to effectively utilize them for tax purposes.

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During the meeting, the Federal Minister conveyed his appreciation for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's for their support in engaging McKinsey & Co. for the ongoing digi-

talization of FBR.

He emphasized the significant potential of e-governance in Pakistan, noting that the digitization of the tax system is a pivotal step towards modernizing tax collection, which will enhance transparency and revenue growth.

Senator Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb also mentioned the necessary improvements required in existing data sources to effectively utilize them for tax purposes. The Minister of State Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik discussed the implementation challenges of RAAST, Pakistan's instant payment system, and ways to improve its functionality.

The meeting concluded with a strong note of commitment from all parties involved to continue working together towards these goals.

PM to embark on five-day official visit to China today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will undertake a five-day official visit to China from tomorrow at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. During the three-segment trip, the Prime Minister will visit the cities of Xi'an and Shenzhen, besides Beijing. Shehbaz Sharif will meet President Xi Jinping and hold delegation-level talks with Premier Li Qiang in Beijing.

Alvi calls for urgent dialogue among all stakeholders

LAHORE (INP): Former president Dr Arif Alvi on Monday called for urgent dialogue among Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and all other stakeholders to help the country navigate out of its current political turmoil.

Addressing a gathering of PTI office-bearers and various wings in Lahore, Dr Alvi congratulated PTI workers, supporters, and the people of Pakistan on the acquittal of Imran Khan, along with former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, in the cipher case. The meeting was chaired by PTI Central Punjab President Ejaz Manhas, with notable PTI senior leaders such as Azam Khan Swati, Brigadier (ret'd) Ejaz Shah, Dr Azeemuddin Lakho, Sardar Azeemullah Advocate, and Zubair Kisan in attendance.

PM's China visit to become a milestone in bilateral relations: Chinese ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said on Monday that under the guidance of two leadership and strong support from the people of both countries, the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China would achieve complete success and become a milestone in the development of China-Pakistan relations. The ambassador in an interview with APP, a day before the prime minister's five-day visit from June 4-8, 2024 to China, said that all preparatory works had entered the final stage, and discussions on Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were in full progress.

At the invitation of Premier Li Qiang, Prime Minister Shehbaz will pay an official visit to China. This is his first visit to China af-



ter assuming the office this year.

Highlighting the components of the visit, he said the prime minister would meet and have talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhao Leji. The leaders will have an in-depth exchange of views on China-Pakistan relations and issues of mutual interest, and jointly draw up a blueprint for the growth of bilateral relations. In addition to Beijing, the prime minister will visit Guangdong and Shaanxi.

"China stands ready to work with Pakistan through this visit to make greater progress in our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and take new steps in building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new

era," the envoy remarked.

Calling China and Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partners and ironclad friends, he said "Our friendship has stood the test of time and remained rock-solid and—to use a Chinese expression—'steady as Mount Tai.'"

He said in recent years, both countries had close high-level exchanges, conducted fruitful and high-quality cooperation on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and maintained sound communication and coordination in international and regional affairs.

Regarding CPEC, he said the landmark BRI project brought a total of US\$25.4 billion in direct investment, 236,000 jobs, 510km of highways, more than 8,000 megawatts of electricity and 886km of

core transmission network, generating a strong impetus to Pakistan's economic and social development.

Under the second phase of CPEC, he said both countries would implement the important consensus reached by their leaders including the strengthening synergy of development strategies and policy coordination and accelerate progress on mega projects including upgrading of ML-1, the Gwadar Port and realignment of Karakoram Highway Phase II. Moreover, the two countries will strengthen cooperation in industry, agriculture, mining, new energy, information technology and other fields based on local conditions and further negotiate and promote trade liberalization.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Large projects again?

The PML-N is back with its signature infrastructure development model, which has been responsible for much of our economic crisis.

While setting an ambitious national development programme target of over Rs3tr for FY25, including a federal PSDP of Rs1.2tr, to pursue a growth rate of 3.6pc, the planning ministry is reported to have opposed the finance ministry's proposal to cut development spending to meet IMF goals. How the lender—with whom Islamabad is negotiating a larger and longer bailout to shore up its international reserves and unlock international funding—will react to the proposals will soon become apparent.

The next budget will be part of the prior actions required by the IMF and key to a staff-level agreement for a new Fund programme. The planning ministry has also disregarded the fact that the current cash crunch may force the country to slash its PSDP estimates going forward and hold back funds for the proposed projects in order to meet Fund conditions—projects that only add to the existing development throw-forward of above Rs9.8tr.

The PSDP for the outgoing fiscal year has been reduced to Rs717bn from the original estimate of Rs950bn due to fiscal constraints as well as to create space for a primary surplus of 0.4pc of GDP to meet the most important condition of the last IMF programme. The proposed PSDP focuses on energy, transport and water projects, but it is not yet clear whether the government plans to complete the ongoing schemes or start new ones.

Considering our current financial condition, the growth target of 3.6pc appears overly ambitious. The Planning Commission itself has stated that growth prospects are subject to "political stability, exchange rate stability on the back of improvement in external account and external inflows, macroeconomic stabilisation under the IMF's programme and expected fall in global oil and commodity prices".

Likewise, an inflation target of 12pc for the next fiscal year may also be missed by a wide margin because of taxation measures, such as a 1pc increase in consumption tax to 19pc and a hike in taxes on petrol—to be included in the budget and the IMF's exchange rate depreciation projections.

The government's high indebtedness and its growing expenditure on debt servicing has put pressure on the upcoming budget, especially with the economy and private investment grinding to a halt. Any further fiscal slippages and succumbing to the temptation to showcase "progress and recovery" through large but deferrable infrastructure projects will worsen the situation.

The current state of the economy demands that the government focus on debt sustainability by curtailing its spending and mobilising more resources through the expansion of its tax base. The public has already paid dearly for the rulers' fiscal profligacy in recent years.

Global gangsters

Zarrar Khuhro

Remember the letter written by six judges of the Islamabad High Court alleging interference by intelligence agencies and state actors? The list of complaints included allegations of illegal surveillance of the judges and their families—presumably in the hopes of uncovering compromising material—all the way to direct and indirect threats. None of this came as a huge surprise to those who know how the system works, nor is the subsequent campaign waged against those judges unexpected. Most of us, I presume, simply shook our heads and said something to the effect of "this is Pakistan, this is just how things are", and moved on with a lingering sense of shame at how impure our land is and how embarrassing it must be for the world to see all this. What would they think?

If you're one of those people, I have some good news for you: we are not alone. No, sir! The fact is that the entire world is rotten to the core. In fact, we're amateurs; the smallest of fries when compared to the truly global gangsters who play on a much wider international stage. Literally. In the sense that the court they tried to compromise is no less than the International Criminal Court (ICC) itself.

A detailed investigation by The Guardian and Israel's 972 magazine has unveiled a decade-long operation by Israel to undermine, intimidate and compromise the ICC itself; the operation was led by then Mossad chief Yossi Cohen with the full personal approval of Benjamin Netanyahu and the complete support of "the highest branches of Israel's government, the intelligence community, and both the civilian and

military legal systems".

The mission was to derail a possible war crimes investigation into Israel by the ICC, and then head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, wasn't playing ball, and America wanted him to step down. Bustani refused, and that's when US official John Bolton threatened him, saying: "We have ways to retaliate against you... we know where your kids live. You have two sons in New York."

Over at the ICC, Be--n-souda was replaced by Karim Khan, whose appointment Israel initially welcomed. Karim also seemed to be playing ball with the Empire by ensuring that a war crimes investigation in Afghanistan did not focus on American actions. But then he went and completed the task Bensouda had begun despite the pressure the likes of which we can only imagine; in a recent interview he alluded to that pressure saying that he had been told by a Western diplomat that the ICC was for Africa and "thugs like Putin", and not, naturally, for the sainted leaders of the 'Free World'.

Consider that this is just what we know, and imagine the kind of tactics these states and leaders have and continue to use to further their blood-soaked imperial interests. Also consider that, after the investigation was published, a Haaretz journalist came and sanctions on Bensouda, with then US secretary of State Mike Pompeo clearly saying that it was due to the Palestine case. Later, in a very familiar echo to Pakistan, he also accused her of corruption.

Such thuggery is par for the course for the US. In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, when

America was building a fake casus belli for attacking Iraq, it turned out that José Bustani, then head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, wasn't playing ball, and America wanted him to step down. Bustani refused, and that's when US official John Bolton threatened him, saying: "We have ways to retaliate against you... we know where your kids live. You have two sons in New York."

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Stateless workers

Naeem Sadiq

Of the 79 miners who have died since Jan 1, 2024, in Pakistan's deadly coal mines, not a single one was registered with the EOBI. They were all born as citizens of Pakistan. They were not refugees. They did not give up their citizenship. They did not give up on the state. But the state gave up on them. The state abandoned them, refused to recognise their existence, and reduced them to 'stateless', benefitless nonentities. By excluding them from the EOBI, the state gave them a future of poverty and dependency. This cruelty is orchestrated by a single government department: the Employees' Old-age Benefits Institution (EOBI).

Pakistan has an informal workforce of around 80 million workers engaged in industrial, agricultural, domestic, and commercial activities. It is their sweat and labour that turn the wheels of industry and commerce. In return, 60 per cent of them are not even given the minimum legal wage. The monthly EOBI contribution is deposited for only 4.7m or 6pc workers. The state has no concern or interest in knowing about the remaining 94pc. Do they exist at all? What and where do they work? Who are their employers? How will they survive with zero post-retirement pensions? It is impossible to fathom why a state knowingly designs a dark and miserable old age for its workers.

Imagine if there was a law that prohibited pension for any Grade 22 government officer, unless there were at least five or more Grade 22 officers working in the same department. Bizarre as it may seem, this is the law we have for Pakistan's workers. It permits all those employers who employ fewer than five employees (and there are

millions of them) to not register their employees with the EOBI. No Pakistani leader has ever understood that every worker above the age of 18 years ought to be registered with the EOBI, regardless of the nature of the work, the number of employees or the type of employment (regular, temporary, contracted, daily wage or through a third-party contractor). Millions of daily wagers and third-party workers in government and statutory bodies are currently outside the ambit of the EOBI for no fault of their own. Even an unemployed or self-employed individual should be able to obtain EOBI registration by personally contributing the requisite amount.

The existing EOBI ought to be dissolved, replaced with professional management, completely digitised, and linked with Nadra. The bureaucratic and cumbersome procedure for enrolment of a new worker and payment of his/her monthly contribution ought to be simplified with a mobile phone app; it should require no human interaction, visiting offices or banks, filling forms or producing photocopies. The EOBI monthly contribution rate ought to be standardised across Pakistan to enable seamless continuity for workers changing jobs or locations.

An alleged 'inspection' system at the institution is said to follow the 10pc rule. You register only 10pc employees, and we look the other way—in return for an amicable under-the-table 'settlement'.

The EOBI ought to jettison all its inspectors and two-thirds of its existing 657 employees, and control all its functions using a handful of professionals and electronic databases. A publicly accessible online database should reflect

each registered employee's name, CNIC, phone number, employer's name, the latest EOBI contribution and the total contribution made thus far. An effective database can monitor and ensure that every single worker in Pakistan is included in the EOBI scheme.

Every registered worker must receive an automatic SMS, by the 10th of each month to confirm the amount contributed on his/her behalf. The system should automatically in--v--oke progressively increasing penalties for employers delaying payments beyond the 10th of any month. On reaching the age of 60 years, workers should be given the choice to either opt for the regular monthly pension or to accept the lump sum amount accumulated during his/her entire years of contribution.

In both cases, the amount must be immediately deposited in the worker's designated bank, instead of involving the worker in a bureaucratic runaround of visiting EOBI offices or providing fresh affidavits, photographs, or certificates.

Pakistan is the only country in the world that pays a pension of Rs1 million to superior judges and a pittance of Rs10,000 to its workers. This amounts to an obscene and immoral pension ratio of 1:100. We ought to slash all government pensions above Rs200,000 to half and increase workers' pension to 75pc of the applicable minimum legal wage.

It is time for Pakistan to end its fixation on the rich, and instead, focus on the 80m abandoned stateless children awaiting recognition, minimum wage, the EOBI and a sliver of humanity. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

CPI inflation decelerates further to 11.8% in May

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation came down to 11.8 percent during the month of May 2024 as compared to 17.3 percent recorded during April 2024, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Monday.

According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year was recorded at 38.0% (May 2023).

On month-on-month (MoM) basis, it decreased to 3.2% in May 2024 as

compared to a decrease of 0.4 in the previous month and an increase of 1.6% in May 2023. According to data, CPI inflation Urban, increased to 14.3% on year-on-year (YoY) basis in May 2024 as compared to an increase of 19.4% in the previous month and 35.1% in May 2023. On month-on-month basis, it decreased to 2.8% in May 2024 as compared to a decrease of 0.1% in the previous month and an increase of 1.5% in May 2023. CPI inflation Rural, increased to 8.2% on year-

on-year basis in May 2024 as compared to an increase of 14.5% in the previous month and 4.2% in May 2023. On month-on-month basis, it decreased to 3.9% in May 2024 as compared to a decrease of 0.9% in the previous month and an increase of 1.7% in May 2023.

The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 15.3% in May 2024 as compared to an increase of 21.6% a month earlier and 43.0% in May 2023. On MoM basis, it decreased by 4.0%

in May 2024 as compared to a decrease of 0.7% a month earlier and an increase of 1.3% in May 2023. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on YoY basis increased to 9.9% in May 2024 as compared to an increase of 13.9% a month earlier and an increase of 32.8% in May 2023. On MoM basis, it decreased by 2.5% in May 2024 as compared to a decrease of 0.7% in the previous month and an increase of 1.0% in corresponding month of last year i.e. May 2023.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Regional Head of Technology and Tax, McKinsey & Co. Tom Isherwood.



Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan presided meeting of Privatization Commission Board.

Trade deficit contracted 15.25% in 11 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The trade deficit contracted 15.25 per cent during the first 11 months of the current financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-May 2023-24, local exports grew by 10.65 per cent as it was recorded at \$28.070 billion as compared to the exports of \$25.368 billion of the same period of the last year, according to the trade figures released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

Meanwhile, imports into the country during the period under review decreased by 2.37 per cent as it was registered at \$49.802 billion as against the imports of \$51.010

billion in the same period of last year. As compared to the corresponding month of last, exports grew by 27.08 per cent in May 2024, whereas the imports into the country increased by 13.89 per cent.

During the month of May 2024, exports from the country were recorded at \$2.792 billion as compared to the exports of \$2.197 billion, whereas the imports into the country were recorded at \$4.902 billion against the imports of \$4.304 billion of May 2023.

On month on month basis, the trade deficit narrowed by 15.43 per cent as in May 2024 as exports grew by 18.76 per cent and imports increased by 1.16 per cent.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where three ships, Zhida-6, Shalamar and TRF Kobescheduled to load/offload Rice, Furnace oil and Chemicals, Terminal at Multi-Purpose Berths, Oil Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile five more ships, MSC Positano, AU Taurus, Kypros Sea, Chem Leona and Al-Marrouna with Container, Palmoil, Canola, Chemicals and LNG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of 7 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, APL Miami, Shalamar, TRF Kobe and Enjanarare expected to sail on today.

06 parties pre-qualify for PIACL divestment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Board of the Privatization Commission on Monday decided to pre-qualify 06 interested parties for the divestment of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited (PIACL).

The 21st meeting of Privatization Commission Board was held under the chairmanship of Minister for Privatization and

Chairman Privatization Commission, Abdul Aleem Khan, said a press release.

The meeting reviewed the recommendations of the pre-qualification committee in light of the results of the scrutiny/evaluation of Statement of Qualifications (SOQs) submitted by eight interested parties for divestment of PIACL.

Punjab govt to set up Sahulat Centres for farmers

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has decided to establish Sahulat centers in every tehsil to provide quality pesticides to farmers at a controlled rate.

Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman presided over a video link meeting of all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners to review cotton cultivation targets, measles situation and Suthra Punjab programme, at the Civil Secretariat on Monday.

The chief secretary directed the commissioners of Bahawalpur, Multan and

DG Khan to ensure full monitoring of the cotton crop. He said that the deputy commissioners must keep a close watch on the prices, supply and demand of urea fertilizer for the next two months and obtain the data of stocks and sales from fertilizer dealers on a daily basis. The chief secretary mentioned that the improvement of health and education sectors was a priority of the government, adding that on the instructions of the chief minister Punjab, the health sector had been included in the key performance indicators (KPIs) set for the deputy commissioners.

Rupee sheds 4 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Monday lost 04 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.36 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.32.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.5 and Rs 280 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 44 paise to close at Rs 301.67 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.23, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

PSX witnessed bearish trend, losses 303 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 303.22 points, a negative change of 0.40 per cent, closing at 75,575.26 points against 75,878.48 points the previous day.

A total of 441,261,756 shares valuing Rs 18.634 billion were traded during the day as compared to 523,299,973 shares valuing Rs 20.574 billion the previous day.

Atif Ikram Sheikh says: Businesses to provide equal opportunities to women to promote gender equality

Gender equality is essential for economic development, M. Akram Farid

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Chairman Central of Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) and Chairman FPCCI TVET and Skill Development Committee

that gender equality is a fundamental human right which is essential for the promotion of sustainable economic development. He pointed out that compared to other



Mian Akbar Farid has called on Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, International Labor Organization and Employers' Federation. A seminar was held on the issue of Pakistan's gender equality and elimination of workplace discrimination. While addressing, Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI said

regional countries, women's participation and contribution to economic development in Pakistan is very low and its basic The reason is women's lack of access to education, training and economic opportunities. FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said that business organizations have the responsibility to provide a favorable environment and work.

KP CM directs admin for immediate repairing of power transformers

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, in view of the current scenario of power load-shedding has directed all Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to immediately make arrangements for the repair and maintenance of out of order electricity transformers in their respective areas.

He issued these directives while chairing a meeting of Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners held here at Chief Minister's House on Monday.

Advisor to KP CM

on Finance Muzzamil Aslam, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan and other relevant authorities attended the meeting.

All Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners participated in the meeting via video link.

The chief minister added that the provincial government will provide all required funds for district administrations for this purpose. He also directed them to work together with WAPDA teams to implement the power load management schedule in

letter and spirit in their respective districts.

The chief minister said that Divisional and District Administrations are frontline team of the government in implementation of its policies and reforms initiatives at grass root level, they need to work out of the book for the enforcement of good governance strategy and providing relief to general public.

He stressed that nobody will be victimized on political grounds, government machinery should focus on public service delivery with enthusiasm and satisfaction.



LAHORE: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in a group photo with children during his visit to Aghosh Orphan Care Home. Khuram Nawaz Gandapur, Barrister Amir Hassan, Colonel (ret'd) Mubashir Iqbal and Raja Zahid Mehmood are also present.

Pervaiz Elahi could not be indicted in fake recruitments in PA case

LAHORE (Online): Former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi could not be indicted in fake recruitments in Punjab Assembly (PA) case.

Anti corruption court accepted exemption from attendance plea of Pervaiz Elahi on medical ground.

Hearing of alleged illegal recruitments in PA case against Pervaiz Elahi and others was held in Anti corruption court Monday.

Anti corruption took

the plea in the petition Pervaiz Elahi gave job in grade-17 to those who had failed in written examination. Anti corruption has filed challan in the court against the accused persons.

The court had summoned Pervaiz Elahi and other accused for indictment but Pervaiz Elahi filed exemption plea in the court on medical grounds. The court while accepting exemption plea adjourned the hearing till June 14.

Two dacoits killed in encounter

VEHARI (APP): Two unknown dacoits were killed and a constable sustained injuries after an exchange of fire between police and dacoits in the limits of Thingi police station, district Vehari.

According to police sources, a police team tried to intercept two suspected motorcyclists but they managed to escape.

The police team chased the dacoits. Meanwhile, the dacoits opened fire at the police team.

The police also retaliated. During the exchange of fire, two unknown dacoits were killed.

Similarly, one police constable named Farhan also sustained injuries. Police also seized stolen items from their possession.

Four drug dealers among seven held in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police have tightened a noose around anti-social elements, arresting seven five accused including four drug dealers recovering over 1.6 kilograms narcotics from them.

According to a police spokesman, the police have intensified operations against anti-social elements following the directions.

6 resolutions passes unanimously by KP Assembly

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Monday unanimously passed six resolutions, while one resolution was withdrawn after the government's assurance.

This assembly recommended the government to make these teachers permanent like other employees and increase their salaries immediately.

Speaker Babar Saleem Swati said that the minimum monthly wage in the province is 32 thousand rupees but these teachers were receiving Rs 21,000.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services, Chairman Cabinet Committee for Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique presenting cheque to Commander of Pak Army for flood affectedees.

Director PAC says: Literature is an artistic depiction of society's diverse facets

RAWALPINDI (APP): Literature reflects society's culture, history, and collective experiences. It is a beautiful form of expression through which thoughts, emotions, and experiences are artistically presented. Literature is not only a means of entertainment but also a source of intellectualism and emotional training for individuals. This was said by Director Punjab Arts Council (PAC) Rawalpindi, Sajjad Hussain while chairing a meeting which held on Monday



KARACHI: Workers of Mohajir Qaumi Movement participating in the protest demonstration against the worst load-shedding and over-billing of electricity in the port city.

Director General Health terms story regarding shortage of ORS, medicines baseless

HYDERABAD (APP): Director General Health Sindh in his rebuttal regarding a news story published in an English national daily related to acute shortage of ORS and other medicines at Civil Hospital Karachi and other hospitals of the province on Monday termed the news story as concocted and baseless.

He said that there was no shortage of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) in Karachi and other hospitals of the province.

He further said that in

Cop injured in attack on polio team

PESHAWAR (APP): A police constable sustained bullet injury in an armed attack by unknown persons on a polio team in Vargari area, district Lakki Marwat.

According to Rescue-1122 the police constable was shifted to Tajazai hospital after necessary first aid and treatment.

Former CM GB announces land donation for special school

ASTORE (APP): Former Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid on Monday announced the provision of 30 kanals of land for the construction of a special school for hearing-impaired children in Skardu.

The school named Nargis Khatoon Hair Improvement School is currently operating in a rented building.

During his visit to the school, Khurshid met with the students and staff and was briefed on the school's operations.

KP private schools reject imposition of tax

PESHAWAR (APP): Hub of Private Education (HOPE), an organization of the private schools Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has rejected the imposition of fixed tax on private educational institutions, termed it an enemy towards education and demanded forthwith withdrawal of the anti-education tax.

The Sunni-Ittehad-PTI led provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has imposed taxes on the private educational institutions varying from Rs.50,000 to Rs.2,50,000 on each such institute.

Addressing a press conference here at Peshawar Press Club (PPC), Sidra-tul-Muntaha,

general secretary HOPE (Women) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that private schools are playing crucial role in increasing literacy rate through giving education to millions of children in their institutes.

She said that they are contributing in the noble cause with their own investment, but on the other hand the provincial government instead facilitation has resorted to anti-education policies. She said that 3.6 million children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are out of the schools and the number is further growing. She said that a child in primary school cost Rs.5000 and Rs.7500/- per child in the public sector schools respectively.

International News

Beijing 'won't allow war, chaos' in Asia-Pacific

Monitoring Desk
SINGAPORE: China will not allow any country or force to create war or chaos in the Asia-Pacific, its defence minister said on Sunday, warning that there were "limits" to Beijing's restraint on the South China Sea and over the deployment of ballistic missiles in the region.

In a keynote speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, AFP quoted Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun as saying: "China has maintained sufficient restraint in the face of rights infringements and provocation, but there are limits to this".

The Philippines and the United States are longstanding treaty allies, and Manila is a key focus of Washington's efforts to strengthen alliances and

partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, which has enraged Beijing.

Given its position in the South China Sea and proximity to Taiwan, which China claims as its own, Philippine support would be crucial for the US in the event of any conflict.

The deployment of "medium-range ballistic missiles" was "severely damaging regional security and stability", Dong said.

"Acting in this way will ultimately burn oneself," Dong also warned of "limits" to Beijing's restraint on the South China Sea, following a series of confrontations between Chinese and Philippine vessels near disputed reefs.

China Coast Guard vessels have used water cannon against Philippine boats mul-

multiple times in the contested waters. There have also been collisions that injured several Filipino troops.

According to China Daily, the defence chief said that in the face of common security challenges, no country can remain unaffected, and there is no such thing as absolute security or exclusive security, noting that there is a long-standing tradition of "helping neighbours in need".

"We do not allow hegemonism and power politics to harm the Asia-Pacific region, we do not allow geopolitical conflicts or cold and hot wars in the region, and we do not allow any country or force to create war and chaos here," he said.

He said that building "a small yard with high fences" has no place in the



Palestinian sisters Samar and Sahar react as they search for their missing mother Amira Al-Breim at the rubble of a house hit in an Israeli strike, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Israeli strikes in central Gaza kill at least 11 as the US pushes a cease-fire plan

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Palestinian health officials said Israeli strikes killed 11 people overnight into Monday, including a woman and three children, in central Gaza.

A strike on a home in the built-up Bureij refugee camp late Sunday killed four people, including the three children.

A second strike early Monday killed seven people, including a woman, in the Nuseirat refugee camp.

The bombardments come days after U.S. President Joe Biden said

Israel has offered Hamas a three-phase cease-fire and hostage release deal, declaring it was time to end the fighting in Gaza and that Hamas is "no longer capable" of carrying out another large-scale attack on Israel.

Israel is expanding its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, once the main hub of humanitarian aid operations.

The Israeli invasion has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and other supplies to Palestinians facing widespread hunger.

Egypt's Sisi orders prime minister to form new cabinet

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reappointed Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly on Monday to form a new government after the latter submitted his cabinet's resignation, following Sisi's reelection for a third term last year, the presidency said in a statement.

Sisi directed the new government to focus on lowering inflation and regulating markets as well as attracting and increasing local and foreign investments, the presidency added.

Claudia Sheinbaum makes history as Mexico's first woman president

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Claudia Sheinbaum was elected Mexico's first woman president by a landslide Sunday, making history in a country plagued by rampant criminal and gender-based violence.

Crowds of flag-waving supporters sang and danced to mariachi music in Mexico City's main square celebrating the ruling party candidate's victory. "I want to thank millions of Mexican women and men who decided to vote for us on this historic day," Sheinbaum said in a victory speech to the cheering crowd.

"I won't fail you," the 61-year-old former Mexico City mayor vowed.

She thanked her main opposition rival Xochitl

Galvez, who conceded defeat. Sheinbaum, a scientist by training, won around 58-60 percent of votes, according to preliminary official results from the National Electoral Institute.

That was more than 30 percentage points ahead of Galvez, and some 50 percentage points ahead of the only man running, long-shot centrist Jorge Alvarez Maynez.

Voters had flocked to polling stations across the Latin American nation, despite sporadic violence in areas terrorized by ultra-violent drug cartels. Thousands of troops were deployed to protect voters, following a particularly bloody electoral process that has seen more than two dozen aspiring local politicians murdered.

Zelensky in Manila to promote peace summit, which he says China and Russia are trying to undermine

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with the Philippine president on Monday in a rare Asian trip to urge regional leaders to a Swiss-organized global peace summit on the war in Ukraine that he accuses Russia, with China's help, of trying to undermine.

Zelensky arrived unannounced and under heavy security in Manila late Sunday after speaking over the weekend at the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore. He was given a red-carpet welcome with military honors Monday at the presidential palace before meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., after which he left the Philippines.

Marcos pledged that his country would take part in the peace summit, Philippine Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said.

"I'm happy to hear

today from you that you'll participate in our peace steps," Zelensky told Marcos. "It's a very strong signal." Zelensky said Ukraine needs more mental health workers for its soldiers. Marcos promised to help and welcomed a decision by Ukraine to open an embassy in Manila this year which would hasten efforts to deliver assistance.

"We have ourselves been trying to promote the continuing adherence to international law in our part of the world," Marcos said. "The issues that you are facing are similar and in parallel to ours and, therefore, the position the Philippines takes is always to promote peace." Both leaders spoke critically of China at the Singapore forum, which was attended by top defense and government officials from around the world, including from Washington and Beijing.



Claudia Sheinbaum, the presidential candidate of the ruling MORENA party, reacts as she addresses her supporters after winning the election, in Mexico City, Mexico.

French govt faces confidence motions ahead of EU vote

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: France's government on Monday faced two confidence challenges in parliament as political temperatures rise ahead of European Parliament elections set to mark a major victory for the far right in the country. The bids to unseat Prime Minister Gabriel Attal and his government, which have little chance of passing, come from opposite ends of the political spectrum—the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) and the far-right National Rally (RN).

An Ipsos poll released

Monday suggested 33 percent of people could vote for the RN list in the June 9 polls, double the likely score for President Emmanuel Macron's governing Renaissance, whose 16 percent placed them just ahead of the chasing Socialists. Launched in rebuke of ministers over budget cuts decreed without parliamentary debate, Monday's votes are the last major political set-piece before campaigning is overshadowed by the 80th anniversary of the World War II D-Day.

Pro-Kremlin activist couple quit Germany, move to Russia

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Two pro-Russian activists in Germany, whose ties to the Kremlin were revealed in a Reuters investigation last year, have left Germany and moved to Russia, the couple's lawyer said in a statement on Monday.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Elena Kolbasnikova and her romantic partner Max Schlund have been active in Germany, organising pro-Kremlin rallies to urge Berlin to abandon its military support to Kyiv.

The Reuters investigation last year identified them as among key individuals pushing a pro-Moscow stance in Germany and revealed that they had received financial help from a Russian government agency.

The couple's home in north-west Germany was raided last August by German prosecutors following a Reuters report that funds collected from supporters in Germany were used to buy walkie-talkie radios, headphones and telephones for a Russian army division fighting in Ukraine.

Sri Lanka rain floods kill 14, schools shut

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: Flash floods, mudslides and falling trees have killed at least 14 people in Sri Lanka as the island nation is battered by monsoon storms, the country's disaster centre said on Sunday.

Some drowned, including three members of the same family swept away near the capital Colombo on Sunday. Others were buried alive in mudslides, including an 11-year-old girl and a 20-year-old man, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC)

said. Nine other people were crushed and killed when trees fell on them in seven districts since the monsoon intensified on May 21, the DMC said.

While Sri Lanka depends on the seasonal monsoon rain for irrigation as well as hydroelectricity, experts have warned that it faces more frequent floods as the world heats due to climate change. The DMC said 20 out of the country's 25 districts were affected by heavy rain and issued warnings to people living on the banks of main rivers to move to higher ground.

Maldives to ban Israeli tourists

Monitoring Desk
MALE: The Indian Ocean nation of the Maldives will ban Israelis from the luxury tourist hot spot, the office of the president said on Sunday, announcing a national rally in "solidarity with Palestine".

The Maldives, a tiny Islamic republic of more than 1,000 strategically located coral islets, is known for its secluded sandy white beaches, shallow turquoise lagoons and Robinson Crusoe-style getaways.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with Federal Minister of Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb at his office.

Green Journalist Awards recognition to media services highlighting climate action: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday conferred Green Journalist Award upon environmental journalists and termed it a recognition to the services of media for highlighting climate action. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) while celebrating World Environment Day 2024 in the series of different contents like awareness walk, debate competition etc, commenced the World Environment Day celebrations by organising Green Journalist Award here at National Press Club, whereas the awards were distributed by Romina Khurshid Alam.

Speaking on the occasion, Romina Khurshid Alam thanked the Director General EPA to revive the awards for climate reporters. She announced that the next climate awards would be held in the name of late Senior Reporter Shabbir Hussain who rendered his life in the line of duty.

"We are going to nominate and dedicate climate journalist awards for male and female journalists in the name of Shabbir Hussain. All four provinces should be taken on board for a national level recognition and under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif those awards would be conferred," she added.

Romina said climate change and global warming has no borders and it's an integral part of our lives. The PM's aide under-

scored that the press club was more than most welcome for collaborations to organise capacity building workshops and awards for supporting the journalist fraternity in improving its climate reporting skills.

"We have launched our first activity from the Press Club. The capacity building of journalists, policy and decision makers is important to learn and grasp the fundamentals of climate reporting," she added. She also paid tribute to the unsung heroes, the fire fighters, who put their lives at risk during forest fire operations. Romina also appreciated the civic agencies and the armed forces for a holistic and coordinated response to the forest fires recently erupted in the Margalla Hills National Park.

PML-N MNAs call for ET judge replacement over bias claims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Three PML-N MNAs from Islamabad submitted applications to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday, requesting a change in the election tribunal due to perceived partiality in the judge's attitude.

Three PML-N MNAs from Islamabad—Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Raja Khurram Nawaz, and Anjum Aqeel—voiced concerns about the fairness of the current election tribunal.

In their application, they expressed apprehensions about receiving fair treatment, citing perceived bias and undue haste by the tribunal.

They contend that the tribunal's conduct undermines their right to a fair trial, a fundamental entitlement safeguarded by Article 4 of the Constitution, emphasizing that every Pakistani deserves impartial judicial proceedings.

Having emerged victorious in the 2024 general elections, the petitioners urged the tribunal to halt the processing of election petition No. 73 of 2024, emphasizing their demand for justice and impartiality in addressing these concerns.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has fixed June 4 for hearing the petitions filed by Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Anjum Aqeel, and Khurram Nawaz seeking a tribunal change. Tomorrow, the commission will also review the request to move the case from the current tribunal, as indicated in its cause list.

BISP, UNICEF to enhance collaborative efforts for women and children health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Noshonuma Programme (BISP) and UNICEF have joined hands to enhance collaborative efforts with a particular focus on enhancing the health and nutrition of women and children in Pakistan.

This was agreed during a meeting of a delegation from UNICEF, led by Country Representative Abdullah Fadi, with the Chairperson BISP, Rubina Khalid here.

During the meeting, Rubina Khalid emphasized her commitment to increasing awareness of the Noshonuma Programme, which aims at addressing malnutrition among women and children. She highlighted the critical role that awareness plays in resolving various issues related to health and nutrition, particularly for vulnerable populations.

"My focus will be on raising awareness of the Noshonuma Programme," stated Rubina Khalid.

"By doing so, we can address many issues, especially those affecting women and children. BISP and UNICEF need to col-

laborate closely on this front to ensure the well-being of our communities", she said. Abdullah Fadi praised BISP's initiatives and commended the program's effectiveness in shock responsiveness, targeted assistance, and financial literacy among its beneficiaries. He underscored the importance of BISP's role in uplifting the socio-economic status of the most vulnerable segments of society. "We need to work together to find practical solutions for the malnourished community, especially women and children," Fadi remarked. "BISP's efforts in better targeting and financial literacy are commendable, and I look forward to our continued collaboration to further these goals", he said. The UNICEF delegation also included key representatives: Anteneh Girma Minas, Chief of Nutrition; Sadaf Zulfiqar, Social Policy Specialist; Dr. Noreen Arshad, Nutrition Officer; Dr. Wisal Khan, Nutrition Specialist; Larissa Bruun, Chief of Resource Mobilization.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme, Mrs. Rubina Khalid engages in a productive dialogue with UNICEF Country Representative, Mr. Abdullah Fadi, at BISP HQ.

PMYP extends NYC m'ship deadline to Jun 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) office has extended the National Youth Council (NYC) membership deadline to June 15.

The PMYP spokesperson told APP that NYC an initiative under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, is now accepting applications till June 15.

She informed that NYC pursues young leaders aged 15 to 29 and provides a platform to advocate for youth development and engagement in governance.

Members will offer non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister while the youngsters are asked not to miss the opportunity and apply at www.pmyp.gov.pk to shape the future of Pakistan.

Edu ministry providing meal to 32000 students of 102 ICT schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on Monday said that National Nutrition Initiative was gaining momentum daily, with 102 schools covered for school meal programs in Islamabad.

According to the Ministry, under meal initiative more than 32,000 students were daily getting nutritious meals in their schools. These meals are found to be beneficial in attracting Out of School Children to regular schooling and reducing dropouts thus, increasing daily attendance and retention.

As per details the number of children in schools benefiting from school meals program including Islamabad Model School F-6/3 Kohsar Market 400 children getting meal under (School Khana Program), Islamabad Model School G-9/1 185, Islamabad Model School F-6/4 St# 46, 400, Islamabad Model School F-10/2, 300, Islamabad Model School G-10/2 (1) 340, Islamabad Model School G-10/2 (2), 270, Islamabad Model School Sihala Kurd 180, Islamabad Model School G-8/1 (1) 359, Islamabad Model School G-8/1 (2) 250, Islamabad Model School G-8/1 (3) 350, Islamabad Model School G-10/1, 555, Islamabad Model School G-11/1, 760 Islamabad Model School 19/1 (1) 425, Islamabad Model School 19/1 (2), 431, Islamabad Model School 1-9/4 (1) 460, Islamabad Model School 19/4 (2) 430, Islamabad Model School G-9/3 (1) 262, Islamabad Model School.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan pens down his remarks in visitors' book over the sad demise of the President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi at the Embassy of Iran.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation delegation calls on Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Delegation of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Monday. The delegation comprised Deputy Director Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Jason Lamb and Foundation's Country Lead in Pakistan Syed Ali Mahmood, said a news release.

Matters related to digitalisation process in Pakistan, Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP), fiberization, connectivity, and digital payments were discussed in the meeting. CEO Karandaz Waqas ul Hasan was also present in the meeting.

Shaza Fatima said the main focus of the present government is digitalization for which steps are underway to facilitate citizens and businesses. She said fiberization, connectivity and digital devices are critical for digitalization. Shaza Fatima said that digitalization will enable efficient public services delivery and higher degree of transparency. The delegation appreciated the present government's vision for digitalization and ensured Foundation's full support in digitalization process in Pakistan. Director General International Coordination, MoITT Syed Jawwad Ali Sherazi was also present in the meeting.

World Football delegation visits Police Lines HQs

ISLAMABAD (APP): According to the details, the delegation from World Football visited Police Lines Headquarters, Islamabad. The delegation consisted of international football players Michael Owen, Emile Heskey, and Amando Moreno, along with football club owners, coaches, and members of healthy activities and promote their mental well-being.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, DIG Headquarters Syed Mustafa Tanveer, and other senior police officials, along with the World Football delegation, watched the match.

that the purpose of the football match was to boost morale among police employees, encourage their participation in healthy activities, and foster their mental and physical development alongside their duties of maintaining law and order. He highlighted how games contribute to personality develop-



Following the match, the IGP Islamabad and the delegation distributed prizes to the winning team and police officers who demonstrated outstanding performances.

The IGP emphasized that the purpose of the football match was to boost morale among police employees, encourage their participation in healthy activities, and foster their mental and physical development alongside their duties of maintaining law and order. He highlighted how games contribute to personality development, character maturity, and the establishment of a healthy society.

Furthermore, he stated that such activities would continue to be held on the sports field in the future.

ICT admin cuts transport fares amid fuel price drop

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has approved the reduction in public transport fares in response to the recent drop in petroleum prices.

Starting today, fares for routes longer than 30 kilometers will see a Rs 10 decrease.

This change aims to provide relief to daily travelers and reflects the transport union's agreement to the fare cut, said the ICT Administration Spokesman.

To ensure transparency and compliance, all public transport vehicles are now required to display their lease deeds prominently on their front screens. This move will help passengers verify that the vehicles are operating under the new fare structure.

The transport union has pledged full support for this fare reduction initiative. They assured the authorities of their cooperation in implementing the new fares across all public transport services in the city.

The district administration has warned that strict action will be taken against any vehicle operators who do not comply with the new fare regulations.

To enforce this, assistant commissioners have been instructed to start fare inspections. This measure is intended to ensure that all transport services adhere to the reduced fare rates and that passengers benefit from the lower costs.

63 gas meters removed over gas theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has disconnected 63 connections during its ongoing crackdown on gas pilferers in Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad, imposing fines totaling Rs 1.6 million.

According to an SNGPL spokesman, in Lahore and Sheikhupura, regional teams disconnected 17 connections due to the illegal use of gas and imposed fines exceeding Rs 1 million against the offenders.

In Faisalabad and Multan, 14 connections were disconnected for illegal gas use, while in Bahawalpur and Gujranwala, 4 connections were severed.

Social media campaign against judge: IHC seeks report from intelligence agency about information log in

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has adjourned till three weeks hearing of contempt of court case for launching social media campaign against Justice Babar Sattar of IHC and leaking his family data and has sought report from intelligence agency about information log in.

The court remarked the date for next hearing will be given in written order.

During the hearing of the case Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked those who have launched social media campaign be traced out.

Justice Sardar Ijaz remarked it is by chance that 3 different campaigns were launched in a day. If anti country elements start five G war, if anti state elements level this allegation that army chief and president have committed blasphemy and as a result siege and arson take place and buildings are set ablaze then will the ISI be able to trace these anti country elements.

IHC reserved judgment in sealing of PTI secretariat, CDA operation cases

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) reserved judgment on petition against sealing of PTI central secretariat and CDA operation.

Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz of IHC heard the cases. Shoaib Shaheen, Umair Baloch and PTI lawyers team appeared in the court on behalf of Umar Ayoub. Lawyer Hafiz Arafat appeared on behalf of CDA while state counsel Malik Abdul Rehman represented the district administration.

During the hearing of the case, Shoaib Shaheen told CDA put notices in their record but no mention is made about the recent notice. CDA committed fraud. If we see, both the notices carry same number. The notices sent by them have not been received by PTI and instead they have sent these notices to Sartaj Ali. CDA have given statement before media that they are going to recover land from Sartaj Ali. They told the media that they have not issued notice to PTI. Arshid Dad and Nasim ur Rehman both are members of PTI. Arshid Dad and Nasim ur Rehman purchased commercial plot on July 17m 2020 after agreement. On July 29, 2020, Siraj Ali who is owner of this plot issued letter to CDA for transfer of this plot located in G-8. On July 30, 2020.

Dengue larvae found in 600 spots across ICT in week

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon Monday chaired a high-level meeting regarding dengue measures in the federal capital, during which officials reported finding dengue larvae at 600 locations across the city in just one week.

The DC emphasized that controlling the spread of dengue required active participation from residents, said the ICT Administration's Spokesman.

The meeting focused on reviewing ongoing initiatives and campaigns aimed at eradicating the larvae.

Despite these efforts, one case of dengue was reported in the city last week.

The deputy commissioner stressed the importance of community involvement in keeping homes and surroundings clean to prevent the breeding of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

Anti-Corruption awareness seminar held at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is ready to collaborate with NAB to raise its voice against corruption at national level and to create awareness among the youth against this scourge, said Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir in his address at the anti-corruption awareness seminar held in the university. Dr. Sahir said that we have campuses in 54 cities of the country, we can introduce short courses, organize seminars, workshops and walks with the cooperation of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to raise awareness against corruption.

Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir said that corruption is the root of all evil, so it is considered as a pest for socio-economic development.

SECP bootcamp to impart financial literacy to over 1500 educators concluded

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, effectively has imparted basic financial literacy concepts to over 1500 teachers from 432 Federal Government Schools & College of Islamabad Capital territory. The training program, conducted in batches of teachers covered essential topics such as savings, investments, importance of financial literacy, its various elements and how to identify scams and frauds etc. The Ministry of Education has announced to integrate topics of financial literacy into curriculums of FG schools.

Addressing the concluding ceremony, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Secretary, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, announced major reforms to modernize the education system.

These reforms include introduction of performance-based incentive system for teachers, training programs for teachers and combining subjects like science with mathematics and Pak studies with Urdu to reduce burdens from students as well as teachers.

He said that subject of financial literacy would be introduced gradually at provincial levels.

Wani emphasized the importance of understanding basic financial skills for youth, especially women, to protect themselves from scams and exploitation.

The Secretary appreciated the role of SECP and national Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) in imparting the necessary skills to teachers through training programs.

Islamabad Capital Police conducted a special anti-riot, anti-terrorist training demo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the special directive of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Capital Police carried out a special anti-riot and anti-terrorist training course to cope with any situation related to peace and security, as stated by a public relations officer.

He mentioned that at the conclusion of the special training courses, police officers presented a practical demonstration of the exercises. IGP Islamabad

Officers also present on this occasion. The Anti-Riot Unit, Counter-Terrorism Department, and Red Zone commandos participated in the training courses. During these exercises, police personnel demonstrated their skills in maintaining peace, safeguarding public and private properties, confronting criminal elements, and effecting arrests, while also showcasing the use of water cannons.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in repairing CCTV camera with the help of heavy crane at Islamabad Highway in the Federal Capital.